

10/525527

DT01 Rec'd PCT/PTC 24 FEB 2005

AMENDMENTS IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows. Claims 1-7 are currently pending.

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An optical disc reproducing apparatus ~~for reading out data optically recorded on an optical disc via~~ comprising:

an objective lens ~~provided~~ equipped with a ring-shaped lens protecting part arranged opposite [[said]] an optical disc and protruding toward said optical disc, ~~characterized in that:~~
and

a reproducing device for reading out data optically recorded on said optical disc via said objective lens, wherein:

at least one concave or concaves for establishing communication between the inside and the outside of said ring is or are formed in said lens protecting part.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The optical disc reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said concave or concaves of said lens protecting part is or are disposed in a direction tangential to said optical disc and orthogonal to the tracking direction so as to bisect the face of said lens protecting part opposite said optical disc.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): An objective lens for reading out data optically recorded on an optical disc, comprising:

~~the objective lens being provided with~~ a lens protecting part arranged opposite said optical disc, wherein:

~~characterized in that~~ said lens protecting part is formed in a ring-shape protruding toward said optical disc and has at least one concave or concaves for establishing communication between the inside and the outside of said ring ~~is or are~~ formed therein.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The objective lens according to claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said concave or concaves of said lens protecting part is or are disposed in a direction tangential to said optical disc and orthogonal to the tracking direction so as to bisect the face of said lens protecting part opposite said optical disc.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A lens protecting part disposed on a face of an objective lens, for optically reading out data recorded on an optical disc, opposite said optical disc, formed in a ring shape protruding toward said optical disc, ~~and characterized in that~~ wherein: at least one concave or concaves for establishing communication between the inside and the outside of said ring is or are formed therein.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The lens protecting part according to claim 5, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein:
said concave or concaves is or are disposed in a direction parallel to a tangent to said optical disc and orthogonal to the tracking direction so as to bisect the face of said lens protecting part opposite said optical disc.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): An optical disc reproducing method for reading out data optically recorded on an optical disc via an objective lens provided with a ring-shaped lens protecting part opposite said optical disc and protruding toward said optical disc, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein:
at least one concave or concaves for establishing communication between the inside and the outside of said ring is or are formed in said lens protecting part, and the pressures inside and outside the ring are equalized to prevent the optical disc and said objective lens from coming into contact with each other.